1: Obermeyer E-5 (1964-1965) 1969 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
'Aishaibat

433
•233
183
241
[461]
[556]
472
433
241
434
177

The Bedouin of al-Qasr idealize the life of the pastoralist. It is a dominant theme in their culture. Gardening and arboriculture are perceived by the Bedouins as involving long hours of work, anxiety over waiting for profits, and complex market operations. They understand the logic and operation of the sheep market. Sheep are a store of value, a source of security, and a medium of exchange. In a good year of rain, a man can reap a good crop of barley, and buy more sheep against the inevitable bad year to come. While most Bedouins are, in one way or another, involved with the modern cash economy which ties al-Qasr to Marsa Matruh, the Bedouins who go into the production of cash crops on a large scale are those who can afford the risk of failure and who can survive the meager profits of the initial stage. These are the men who can adjust their world view from that of the pastoralist to that of the entrepreneur. There are only a few of these men in al-Qasr but they dominate the economy. Through them, most of the Bedouins of al-Qasr are linked to the national economy.

Land and Economy

433
177
178

The period between 1960 and 1964 was one of significant economic change in al-Qasr. Dependence upon farming increased while pastoralist activities became less important. In the past, none of the Bedouins now living in al-Qasr were "nomads;" even my oldest informants had moved only once or twice to

1: Obermeyer E-5 (1964-1965) 1969 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
'Aishaibat

TABLE 2

AID PER MONTH TO THIRTEEN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES OF MATRUH AREA, 1963

657
474

	No. of Families	Beef	Fish	Oil	Cheese	Tea	Powdered Milk
al-Qasr Aid:	308 (1344)*	1008	604	604	1209	201	1209
Total Aid:	627 (3134)*	2350	1410	1410	2826	470	2820

*Number of Persons

al-Qasr during the year 1963. This amount is compared with the total amount of aid given to all thirteen cooperatives in the area.

654
●233

During this period, 1960 to 1964, the government has succeeded in stabilizing the pastoral sector of the economy. The Bedouins are given barley and cottonseed-oil cakes as fodder for their animals. Consequently, they must depend upon their own barley crop only to a minimal degree. There are 144,804 sheep in the Marsa Matruh area, as of 1963. In al-Qasr, 332 men own 9,958 sheep, about 30 sheep per man. One sheep requires a kilogram of barley and six kilograms of cottonseed cake per month. The table below shows the amount of fodder distributed to al-Qasr and the whole Matruh sector, in 1963, through the cooperative societies.

[474]

TABLE 3

FODDER DISTRIBUTED IN MATRUH SECTOR, 1963

	No. of Sheep	Kg. of Barley	Kg. of Cottonseed Cakes
al-Qasr	9,958	85,392	56,928
Total Distribution	144,804	1,303,236	868,824

the cooperative societies.

Barley is the important staple in al-Qasr: it is used for bread and fodder. About one-half of the Bedouins plant barley on a small scale. The wealthy individuals who own large flocks of sheep plant up to 100 acres of barley. Barley is planted in October and harvested at the end of April. Two methods of cultivation are used: plowing and seeding takes place either before the rains, i.e., the 'afiir system, or, after the rains, i.e., the haraati system. After harvesting, the grain is threshed and stored in two-meter deep pits (matmuura). Grain stored in this fashion can be preserved for three years.

The main vegetables raised in al-Qasr are onions, radishes, peppers, and mint. Mint is the only dependable cash crop of those mentioned. It is used by the Bedouins in tea, and tea drinking is a ceremony which takes place at all times of the day in the desert.

245 blossoms of the tree are stripped away by these winds before
177 the fruit can mature.

178 Traditional values affect the Bedouins' perception of
517 their new life. Men are fond of gathering for their ritual
272 three cups of mint tea and recalling "the good old days." In
[829] those days, they say, men only had to ride, shoot, and drink
• 233 tea. In the past, there was a great deal of security in
178 owning animals which are not as dependent on the rains as
422 is agriculture. During a year of bad rains, a Bedouin could
233 always move his flock to Libya or to the Nile Valley: "When
731 we have a bad year, we take our animals to the grass of our
166 relatives. When they have a bad year, they come here." In
167 the drought year of 1960, 20,000 Egyptian Bedouins migrated
to Libya in search of pasturage. This caused an international
[648] conflict and King Idris of Libya, for a short time, closed the
border to Bedouins. The conflict was finally resolved, and
the Bedouins were given permission to use the pastures of
Cyrenaica. None of the Bedouins of al-Qasr were involved in
this movement.

233 The Bedouins who have settled in the 'izba sector of
al-Qasr also prefer to keep some sheep. The security which
they represent is worth the time and expense of maintaining
233 them and paying a shepherd to look after them. The Bedouins,
178 in the past, paid their shepherds one sheep for every ten
465 sheep that he tended. Payment was made twice a year. Today,

•233 with the movement toward a cash economy, this has changed.
178
[465] The shepherd receives 8 to 10 piasters for each head of sheep which he tends. The Bedouins who have taken up farming can spare none of their family for sheep-herding chores. If he
[497] can afford it, during the dry season, a Bedouin may ship his sheep to the Nile Valley by train at 12 piasters per head. But the government will not accept sheep for shipment unless they are accompanied by a shepherd. The role of shepherd has become a very specialized one in the al-Qasr area. Few
[554] of the al-Qasr Bedouins are shepherds, and the role is reserved for the poorer men without land.

241 Plowing in the garden area is done by hand. Usually,
407 the plow is pulled by a donkey but occasionally, if one can
492 afford it, a camel or a horse will be used. A man and his
[462] sons handle all of the agricultural chores with the exception
178 of the winnowing process which the women do. Traditionally,
241 barley was threshed by camels plodding on it. The Bedouins say
492 that this is the best way because the soft feet of the camel do not crush the kernel. Now, however, very few men can afford
[407] a camel. Threshing is done with a heavy wooden sled pulled by
241 a donkey or a horse. Tractors, when available, are used for
407 agricultural plowing in the southern barley zone. This zone,
434 during the year 1963, also became important for raising water-
433 melons (batiikh), and this product figures to be an excellent cash crop for al-Qasr. Melons and barley can bring high profits

407 the lack of spare parts. Three of the tractors were Russian-built, and two were Egyptian made. The Bedouins say that the Russian tractors are the better.

407 241 654 [132] In 1964, the Western Desert received its heaviest rainfall since 1947. To take advantage of this, local government officials of the reclamation project requested an additional fifty tractors for plowing on the coastal zone. They received only six additional tractors. In that year, the thirty-nine tractors used in the entire Western Desert were able to plow 15,240 acres of land. During this period of economic change, 731 •233 [654] a bad barley crop causes a fodder shortage for the animals, and seldom is the aid program able to compensate for this. [166] Consequently, there is a need to ship sheep to the Nile Valley, or to seek permission to take them to the pastures of Cyrenaica. Both situations create tremendous difficulties for both the Bedouins and the government. A third alternative for the [432] [435] Bedouin is to buy barley on the black-market. In doing this, he must pay six times the normal cost of grain, and risk reprisals.

177 657 Prior to 1960, change in al-Qasr might be characterized as a steady and endogenous process of sedentarization. It had been taking place for about a century and a half. Exogenous change, social and economic, may be identified with the desire of the government to reclaim land in al-Qasr for agricultural use, and to integrate the Bedouin into the national economy.

423 society. Private ownership of land with sovereign rights
* [613] over it is now the normal practice in al-Qasr. Rights are
178 held by the family head, the shaib. If the family head is
[596] deceased, land tenure rights are held jointly by the sons.

In the area beyond the plateau, in the extreme
[184] south of al-Qasr, land rights to grazing and water still are
* [613] associated with lineages. But here agriculture is impossible.
[241] The type of rights over the land varies with the method by
which it is exploited. The southern and coastal sections of
[433] al-Qasr represent the old and the new, the pastoral traditional
mode of production and the modern agricultural cash economy.
• [233] But, as noted, of the total population only a few Bedouins
are actually engaged in pastoralist activities. Hence, tribal
tenure rights, in general, are not overly important at this
time. Not too long ago they were, and many cases in the recent
[671] history of Bedouin customary law relate to conflicts over land
and water in the southern region. The Bedouins say that
[178] traditionally no lineage could use the pasturage or water of
* [613] another without some agreement, usually of long standing,
[233] made beforehand. Now, they say, permission is not needed.
[675] In the old days, these agreements were made between lineage
representatives, not individuals per se. Today, the grass
178 and water in the southern zone are claimed, though not in a
423 legal sense, by the families using them: the rights of
usufruct over the land are closer to rights of sovereignty

(literally, sky-wells, to indicate that they are dug to receive and preserve rain water). Most of these are ancient Roman pools which were claimed either by the government or by individuals, and are put into use again to store rain water. Recently, the government has erected a number of dams to preserve the rain water in exceptionally good years from flowing into the sea. All this, however, is not enough to provide the tribal population in the area with a permanent supply of water because of the limited capacity of the cisterns and the pools and the scarcity of rain and its erratic nature. Recent attempts have been made to tap the underground water in some parts of the area. A large number of wells were sunk, especially along the coast.

The economy of Awlad Ali is based on livestock husbandry, supplemented by occasional cultivation of barley. Owing largely to the variation in the amount of rainfall, the sources of food in the area have the important characteristic that the place and amount of their occurrence vary from one year to the next. Throughout most of the area, the tribal populations are concerned predominantly with warding off shortages in the food supply by moving with their flocks to areas where grazing lands are available.

Awlad Ali keep a variety of domestic animals, the most important of which, from the economic point of view, are sheep and goats. The economy of Awlad Ali is based on the utilization of the products of these two animals. These products are milk, meat, wool, and hides. Milk and its products constitute the basic element of the people's diet. Milk is never consumed fresh. It is always made into sour milk (maleh), kishk (dried milk), or butter.

236 286 Wool is also very important to the economy of Awlad Ali. Lamb's wool is either sold or spun and woven into rugs. Goat's wool is spun and woven to provide the cover for the tents.

231 [262] [432] [438] Sheep and goats are rarely slaughtered for meat except on special occasions. Most male and many female lambs and kids are sold in the market and the money is used to buy the necessary supply of food (like tea, sugar, salt, etc.), clothes, and other household items. Most of 438 439 443 these items are obtained from the shops in the settled communities in the area, although some of the major items can be obtained only from large urban centers like Alexandria.

231 492 [236] [554] The other domesticated animals that Awlad Ali keep are the donkey for transport and riding, a few camels for heavy transport and also for wool, very few horses for riding on special occasions (they are considered as a status symbol for those who own them), and the dog to guard the camp and to protect the herds from wolves and other predators.

235 432 Poultry are usually kept for meat and eggs which are sometimes sold by the women in the nearby markets.

• 233 137 [132] The main occupation in the area is stock raising. Grazing lands extend generally south of the cultivated land in the northern strip. The growth of pasture plants is affected by the amount of rainfall in a particular year. Low rainfall causes acute shortages of pasture and herbage, and leads to the death of animals by both starvation and thirst. Pasture plants comprise a wide variety of bushes, scrub, and many other species of grasses, most of which have a very short life span. These plants normally persist from December to May; then the land is turned into arid, hard desert with only a few dispersed patches of dry grass.

233 221 The grazing season extends between November and April. As the dry season advances, the flocks are moved northward to the cultivated lands so as to be nearer to fodder and to the waterholes which stand usually very close to the coastal zone. During the dry season, animals live mainly on barley straw and very little dry grass. In exceptionally bad years, the people are compelled to dispose of their animals or to sell some of them in order to be able to maintain the rest. In such years the shepherds find it necessary to cross the border to the permanent pasture of Cyrenaica in northeastern Libya, or to move to the Delta where they may purchase the right to graze in wheat fields after reaping the crop.

243 Grain crops, mainly barley, are also grown in the area. Depending on the rainfall, pockets of land characterized by deep alluvial soil and underground water at various depths are cultivated with barley and other grain crops. Barley cultivation is preferred by the people because it grows quickly and matures faster than wheat; also, it can be cultivated in a range of soils and climates; it is mostly used as animal feed. Barley straw is also used as fodder for animals. Because of the erratic nature of rainfall, barley production is hazardous in most of the region. For this reason, pastoralism remains the most important mode of subsistence, and cultivation becomes secondary. Cultivation is done on the basis of shifting cultivation, which means that the areas cultivated vary from one year to the next following the rainfall.

[246] [132] [233] [433]

Land Tenure

423 311 Most of the cultivable lands, as well as the grazing lands, are under tribal occupation. Awlad Ali have, by custom and usage, had for

423 311 619 can he do this, but he can also sell that right. The right to sell the share of the tribal land has recently become recognized in the Western Desert, and the usufruct right is being treated in the same way as ownership.

423 311 619 233 While the boundaries of the cultivable land belonging to the tribe are guarded, when it comes to grazing land, the boundaries are not so much enforced. The tribes of the Western Desert of Egypt are quite tolerant in allowing members of other tribal segments to graze their flocks wherever grazing lands are available. Everyone from any tribe can graze his flocks in areas that offer better pasture. But in doing so, he does not have the right to use the wells and cisterns of the tribal segment.

[312] [432] Water is scarce and valuable. Cisterns are owned by the tribal segments, and if an outsider wants to use the water, he has to buy it from the owner for the whole season for a sum ranging between $100-$180.

423 656 In 1958, with the extension of the Mariut irrigation project, a Desert Land Possession Law was enacted and came into force in 1960. This law restates the right of the government to the ownership of the land, and therefore does not recognize the tribal possessions of the land, even when they have made certain improvements in it, such as planting trees or digging wells. However, it gave the right of the occupants of a certain area of land to request either the purchase of the land or its lease for a period not exceeding nine years, granted that such is made within one year of the passing of the law. Failing to do so within one year, the government will either remove the plants and buildings, or confiscate them without compensation.

423 656 The above law met with opposition from the tribal population in the area. As a result of this opposition, a new law was enacted in 1964 (Law #100). Although this later law eliminated some of the shortcomings of the previous one, it is not itself without disadvantages. The 1964 law recognizes the Bedouins' right of ownership only in areas where the fairly permanent trees were planted before 1958. Rain-fed areas cultivated from season to season are excluded. The new law also provides for the sale and transfer of land. Any person can purchase up to 50 feddans (acres) provided that he can develop it into an economic enterprise. The law also provides for the distribution of arable lands in such a way as to permit each head of household to own 10 feddans and to be provided with water possibilities. The price of this kind of land is to be paid over a period of 30 years. Settlers are encouraged and helped in planting trees and building dikes. So far, 8,600 feddans [312] irrigated by windmills have been psesessed by members of Awlad Ali tribes, and titles to their holdings are being issued.

233 423 656 With regard to grazing lands, no legislation has yet been issued, and the government feels that at this stage of development, it is essential to start educating and inducing the tribal population of the Western Desert in initiating and implementing new programs for preventing overgrazing and controlling the number of flocks.

The Group

619 The name Awlad Ali covers a number of ethnically distinct groups. In addition to Awlad Ali proper (the descendents of Ali), referred to as the Sa'adi, it includes a number of Murabiteen (holy men) tribes who are attached to various segments of Awlad Ali and occupy an inferior political position. The name also includes various peasant

613 Written agreements such as the above are becoming more common in
675 the area. The need to have the responsibility of the vengeance group
[198] or the Amar recorded and the names of its members listed stems from the
[361] increase in the geographical mobility of individuals and separate house-
[464] holds seeking jobs with the government organizations in the area or with
the various industries in the towns and cities outside the Western Desert.
233 The uncertainty of pastoral nomadism and the delicate balance which exists
178 between pastures, animal population, and human population is pushing an
182 ever-increasing number of people to abandon the way of life which they
had lived for generations. Animals are extremely important to sustain
233 the pastoral life of Awlad Ali. Once the balance between the pasture and
182 the animal population is upset by a draught, a segment of the human popu-
73 lation has to make new adjustments. This adjustment is first made by
166 moving with one's flocks to areas in the Delta or in the Cyrenaica region
of Libya. This is a short-term adjustment, however, and cannot be con-
tinued for long periods of time. Pastures in the Delta have to be pur-
chased, and in most cases the owner of the herd has to sell part of his
[619] herd to feed the rest. The Cyrenaica pasture is very limited and re-
stricted by the strong tribal control of the Cyrenaica Bedouins, who in
general are not friendly with many of the tribal segments living in the
233 Egyptian Western Desert. If the draught continues beyond a certain time,
731 the individual owner of a herd may find himself forced to sell the herd
464 and seek other modes of subsistence in the form of part-time or full-time
434 employment as a semi-skilled or unskilled worker with the government or
182 industrial organizations. Such jobs are usually viewed as a temporary
source of income to help the individual and his immediate family live

233 731 464 434 182 through a hard year and to help him replace the herd he has lost. In many cases a dry year is followed by another and many of these employed find themselves depending more and more on their income from the jobs. The security of the employment is often compared favorably with the uncertainty of nomadic existence, and many decide to abandon the pastoral life on a more or less permanent basis. But even when one makes such a decision, he usually retains a strong affiliation with his original way 613 182 682 of life. He retains an active interest in the affairs of his Amar, especially those from which he can benefit in one way or another. One important gain he might get is through sharing in the receipt of bloodmoney for the killing of any member of the Amar, and having the Amar paid in his behalf. But while asserting their membership in the Amar at the time of such distribution, very few, if any, would show themselves when the membership of the Amar is called upon for the collection of bloodmoney which the Amar has to pay for a murder committed by one of its members. 613 682 578 It is known in the area that members of one bait of the Aggary Amar (Bait Ahmad) have never paid their share of the bloodmoney of the last twenty years, but always claim their share in the distribution of bloodmoney. Many members of that Bait claim that the Bait has long been separated from the Aggary Amar, although this claim is denied by the rest of the Amar as well as by those members of Bait Ahmad who claim their share in the receipt of bloodmoney.

613 675 578 Disputes such as these, which are not limited to the Aggarty, led many Amars to attempt to make comprehensive lists of all members of the Amar and to require a written agreement in case of separation of a given Bait from the Amar.

621 which ranges from two to ten kilometers. The camp coincides with the
233 herding unit. The herd of the camp is usually grazed as a unit, often
621 by a paid shepherd hired by the members of the camp as a whole. Origi-
233 nally the camp moved as a unit for grazing. This was essential in the
621 era of the tribal warfare and raiding where the security of the herd
361 and that of the people depended on such collective movement. In a type
178 of organization adapted to periodical movement, the camp offered the optimum sized community: small enough to permit easy movement and large enough to offer the kind of protection which individual families could
621 not have offered. In this era the camp seemed to have been a closely
178 knit group. Many of the informants still remember the time when the
622 camp was under the strong control of the headman who made the major de-
361 cisions of where and when the camp should move. It was those decisions
233 that determined the safety and the security of the group. The headman had strong authority over members of his camp. Such authority was based mainly on his ability to exercise valid judgments as to whether or not the group should move and the route that it had to take if movement was decided upon. At the present time, and with the diminishing of raiding and tribal warfare in the area, the authority of the headman seems to have diminished along with it. The camp appears at the present time to be mostly a residential unit with minimal leadership and with a rapidly changing composition. Different families join the camp at different times during the year.

621 Although the membership of the camps is drawn from the bait, a camp
613 does not, in terms of its genealogical composition, make up a descent segment of that Bait. The membership of a camp is based on a completely

634 554 659 who reach the age of military service. He is also supposed to report the presence of any fugitive or criminal in his district and report crimes occurring in that district and which involve members of the tribal segment he represents.

634 554 657 562 701 178 The first two duties of the omda to the government do not involve any conflict of interest. Unlike the rural areas where sons are considered a very important economic asset to their parents, and therefore, there is a general resentment of military service which takes the sons away and deprives the parents of their important work around the fields, Awlad Ali look at military service as

1 On the basis of one percent of the yearly yield.

an opportunity to have their sons go to the city, obtain guaranteed payment, and escape the hardship of nomadic existence. Economic activities [233] in the area do not require the cooperation of a large number of individuals, and most of the grazing of animals is done either by a paid shepherd or by one of the grown-up sons. Although there still exists an [183] ideology which values having many sons, yet with the cessation of hostilities between the tribal segments, their presence in the area has lost its [464] value. Many of the younger generation are seeking jobs with the government projects in the area or in the city. Neither one is easy to find. Joining the army is increasingly considered as an easy alternative.

634 554 657 674 The omda's function which seems to involve some conflicting loyalties is that of reporting crimes involving members of his tribal segment. But even this does not pose a serious problem as it might seem. Almost all minor crimes committed against property or persons as well as all civil disputes are left to be handled by the tribal proceedings. The duties of the omda are limited to reporting the cases of murder and serious assault

586 562 women in the Western Desert, and that the women usually have no difficulty in finding another husband.

586 562 593 768 While the right of "throwing herself" offers the wife some guarantee of her rights, her main guarantee is derived from the security she gets from retaining membership in her father's family. After the death of the father, the woman's claims extend to the households of her brothers. She acquires in them the same rights she had in her father's household, and the brothers take the responsibility of their father in protecting and defending their sister. The woman achieves this continuation of support partially through forfeiting her rights of inheritance to her brothers. [428]

562 428 [779] Awlad Ali recognize the right of the daughters to inherit in their father's estate. They accept the system of inheritance specified in the Koraan which gives the woman half the share of her brother. In practice, this is usually side-stepped. Only sons inherit their father's property. The justification given for the non-inheritance of women is that the main items of inheritance in the Western Desert, livestock and the right of land use, require certain protection and care which are beyond the culturally defined roles of women. Livestock require moving from one grazing ground to another, almost always crossing tribal lands belonging to various tribal segments, some of whom might be hostile. It also requires the ability to protect the herds from predators and from raids, especially in earlier times. Similarly, land requires preparation and protection against trespassers, especially when the barley is growing. [233] [311]

562 428 593 Women, however, are supposed to be compensated by their brothers for their shares. But very few would actually ask their brothers for

562 428 593 such compensation. In forfeiting her rights of inheritance, a woman secures for herself and her children the continuous support of her kin-group and the protection of her rights. This support was denied in the few cases I was able to collect in which the woman demanded her share of inheritance. The following is one of these cases. The material 159 562 428 593 presented is a summary of the life history of Fatma, who at the time of the study, was a shopkeeper managing the small general store she owned near the railroad station of Burg el-Arab, some fifty miles west of [441] [158] Alexandria. She also practiced healing and midwifery on a part-time basis.

Fatma was the only daughter with four sons of sheikh El-Asi, who at one time was the aqila of bait Hussein of the Sanagrah tribal segment [627] [155] in the area. He was also known as a mardi and was frequently sought in mediation of disputes. He was believed to have supernatural power which he used to cure people for a certain amount of money. During his life- [454] time, he had acquired a sizable sum of money which he invested in live- [233] stock. At the time of his death his herd, which numbered more than 900 [422] sheep and goats, was considered the finest in the area. He had no barley [423] lands because his camp was deep in the desert, but he had fine grazing land.

Throughout the area the four sons were known for being arrogant and irresponsible. Three of them were employed by one of the irrigation projects carried on by the government in the area as construction workers; the fourth looked after the herd of his father. All four were known as chasers of women, and they frequently went to Alexandria to visit prostitutes and drink liquor.

[444] Fatma was first married when she was eighteen to a man from Alexandria who had opened a general store in the area where her father

159 562 428 593 444 lived. Five years ago the husband died in a mining accident leaving Fatma with a ten-month-old boy. By that time, her father had been disabled, and her brothers wanted to manage her husband's store on her behalf. Knowing that her brothers were greedy, she refused and insisted that she take care of the store herself. The brothers objected on the grounds that it was not customary for a decent woman to be exposed to the customers in the store. When she insisted, the brothers threatened her. When the threats did not work, they beat her. After that, she [625] went to the police station in the area, filed a complaint against her brothers, and asked for police protection. The police officer in charge brought the brothers in and warned them that if they interfered with the store, not only would he arrest them, but he would also use his influence to get them forced from the irrigation projects where three of them worked. The threat worked, and they became friendly with their sister, buying things for the store whenever they went to Alexandria and sometimes helping in the store with her consent when she was on housecalls as a midwife. A year later Fatma was married for the second time to a 159 562 428 593 distant cousin; a few months later her father died. In a family meeting 233 that followed the funeral, Fatma made her announcement that she was claiming her share of her father's herd. The brothers were angry and tried to [587] beat her. But the older members of the bait who were present at the meeting stopped them and told them that Fatma had all the right to claim her share of the inheritance according to Awlad Ali ways and that there was [578] nothing that they could do about it. She was characterized in that meeting as "bint haram" (illegitimate child), an insult used to refer to those who show selfishness in their kinship obligations. When she left the camp with her share of the herd, this seemed to have severed

159 the relationship between her and her brothers.
562
428 Following her action and until the time of the study, they had
593 never visited her and she had never visited them. Her husband took
[237] care of the herd; and the arrangement worked out all right until the
159 husband told Fatma one day that he was going to marry a second wife.
562
593 She refused, but he went ahead with the marriage without her consent.
595 He brought the new wife to live with Fatma in the same tin hut in which they were living. He started to pay more attention to the new wife and to neglect Fatma; whenever the latter complained, he beat her. Then, before one of the religious feasts, he sold two of Fatma's sheep and bought his new wife a dress and a silver bracelet. When Fatma objected
[164] and they argued, he hit her with a stick on the head; she was hospitalized for a week with a serious head wound. While in the hospital, she went to her brothers who lived only two miles away, but they refused to
159 come to her assistance. She then went to sheikh Elewa (the aqila of
562 Bait Asabei) and threw herself on him. He met with the husband and con-
594 vinced him to divorce Fatma. He kept forty sheep of Fatma's herd as com-
593
595 pensation for the mahr he had paid her and the marriage expenses, then
586 took his new wife and moved from Fatma's hut. Fatma then returned and
159 managed her financial affairs successfully herself. She managed the
562 store and hired a shepherd to take care of the sheep. At the time of
444 the present study she was respected by almost everybody in the area, in-
[233] cluding members of the local administration. She is known to be reason-
[229] able and of sound opinion, and her store functions as the meeting place
[521] for many of the tribal mi'ads and for casual conversations. She is also considered as a liason between the tribal population in the area and the local government administration, and is respected by both sides.

311 was a large area of grazing land which also belonged to the Bait
423
613 of Yadem. The area attracted a large number of tribesmen who
233 brought their herds for grazing. One of these was Kuraiem from
311 Awlad Kharouf tribal segment. He brought his wife and child and
619
613 a herd of more than two hundred sheep and goats. Although it is not proper for one to cultivate the land belonging to another tribal segment, yet, when it comes to grazing land, no such restriction is imposed. Only the permission of the aqila of that tribal segment is required, and even that is granted so automatically that many tribesmen do not bother to ask for such permission. Kuraiem took this permission for granted and pitched his
233 tent in the grazing land of Yadem and his Bait. Yadem, however,
311 was disturbed because he thought that Kuraiem grazed his flocks in
578 an area very close to his cultivated barley, so close that he feared that the animals might eat the growing barley. When Yadem asked Kuraiem to move a little further and Kuraiem refused, they entered into an argument during which Yadem told him that if he did not move by the following day, he would break his neck. The following morning Yadem went with his brother to see if Kuraiem was still there. Both Yadem and his brother were armed with heavy sticks. As they reached Kuraiem's tent, they hit him with the sticks on
[682] the head. Kuraiem fell on the ground, and they kept hitting him until he was dead.

682 In due course, Kuraiem's family claimed L.E. 400 bloodmoney
672 for the intentional killing of Kuraiem. Yadem and his family rejec-
[627] ted the claim and insisted that the killing was unintentional. The Mi'ad was held, and the two Mardis selected by the two parties

613 the tent and fearing that he might have been a member of the
628 feuding Bait intending to harm him or members of his family, Galil took his gun and went outside to see who was there. He called on the person to identify himself. When he got no answer, he warned him that unless he identify himself, he (Galil) would fire his gun in the air as a warning. After a short period of no
613 response, Galil fired his gun in the air. A moment later, Galil
628 heard a cry coming from the direction of a small hill at the side
682 of the tent. When Galil went there, he found Salem, a member of a neighboring camp, lying on the ground with a bullet wound in his stomach. He told Galil that his wife was sick and that he had come to borrow Galil's donkey to take her to the doctor in the nearby medical center. He had taken the short cut to Galil's tent when he was hit by the bullet which Galil had fired in the air. Galil took his wounded neighbor to the medical center, but Salem died before they reached it.

682 The Mi'ad was held, and Galil and his family had to pay L.E. 400
672 to the victim's kin group. The amount was that specified for in-
627 tentional killing, since the wound that caused the death was in-
673 flicted by a lethal weapon.

CASE #5: The Case of the Startled Shepherd

•233 This case involves Idris, a poor member of the Sheresat tribal
[464] segment. He earned his living by working as a hired shepherd for
[619] 'Awwad from Bait Ibrahim in the area of Gharbaniat. During the dry
[312] season, each shepherd takes his flocks to the water wells near the coast and leaves them there for three or four hours to get their fill of drinking water. That afternoon, Idris, waiting for the

233 animals to drink, sat on the edge of the well with his feet in the cool water of the pool completely absorbed in his thoughts amidst the quiet surroundings. Passing by the pool at that time was Mahdi 233 576 165 from a neighboring tribal segment. Seeing Idris (whom he had not known), he shouted the customary greeting, "Peace on you." Startled by the voice of Mahdi, Idris lost his balance and fell in the deep water of the pool. Mahdi rushed to help him, but the water was too deep, and Idris drowned. Feeling sorry for Idris, Mahdi took the flock and went back to the camp of Idris where he informed the latter's wife of what had happened. A few days later, Mahdi was 682 627 [613] paid a visit by Sheikh Elewa, the aqila of Bait Asabei' and known mardi in the area who informed Mahdi that the family of Idris was demanding the payment of the sum of L.E. 300 for the death of their 682 627 672 613 relative. A Mi'ad was set for the following week. In that Mi'ad, and after Mahdi admitted that it was his greeting that had startled Idris and caused him to fall in the well, the two Mardis representing the two parties agreed that the payment of the sum of three hundred pounds was in order and that Mahdi and his amar must pay it to the victim's family as soon as possible. At first, Mahdi seemed to accept the judgment of the two Mardis, especially when both were prominant members of some of the influential tribal segments in the area. But Mahdi was a poor man, and his amar was very small in number, which made the payment of the bloodmoney almost impossible. 682 627 692 695 Although appeal in the ordinary legal sense does not exist in such a system like that of Awlad Ali, where no judgment is forced upon any of the disputing parties, and where the pronouncement of the

105 The judicial process among Awlad Ali of the Western Desert of Egypt has been dealt with in the context of political organization of
105 the group. The main feature of the political organization of Awlad Ali
613 is the absence of centralized leadership. The only formally recognized leadership is that of the aqila, the leader of the bait tribal segment.
105 The sources of the aqila's authority derive from a number of sources,
613 one of which is his judicial role. It is through him that disputes in-
627 volving members of his bait are solved. The process by which he performs this crucial function is that of informal mediation in which both the personal qualities of the aqila, as well as the weight of his tribal
[692] segment, play an important role. This is especially important in a society with no court system or formal hearing and where durability of any settlement depends on its being accepted by the parties involved.

105 The main aim of the judicial process is to affect reconciliation of
182 the parties and to restore a certain degree of social order and cohesion
627 that was disrupted by the dispute. The need to restore the social order
[619] and to maintain friendly relations between tribal members is a response to certain aspects of the natural and social environment in which the
105 group finds itself. Natural resources in the area are very meager, and
182 subsistence activities require that the tribesmen constantly move with
619 their herds for pasture throughout an area already divided among the
● 233 various tribal segments. Since the place and nature of pasture differ from one year to the next, the identity of the specific tribal unit which would be sought for help varies correspondingly. This creates a general feeling of dependency that characterizes the social relations in the area.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

the steep sides of which make east–west journeys slow and arduous. To the west this broken country levels down, and in a bay in the hills lies the extensive treeless, but very fertile, basin of al-Marj, known to Europeans as the Barce Plain. It was colonized in classical times and again recently by the Italians. The Arabs call this first terrace *lusaita* (*al-wasaita*), the middle part, because it lies between the coastal plain and the plateau tableland formed by *al-zahir*, the second terrace. This tableland is famous for its Graeco-Roman ruins and is dotted also with the deserted farms of Italian colonists. It mounts to a narrow third terrace, at about 875 metres above sea level, from the top of which one can look down on these settlements.

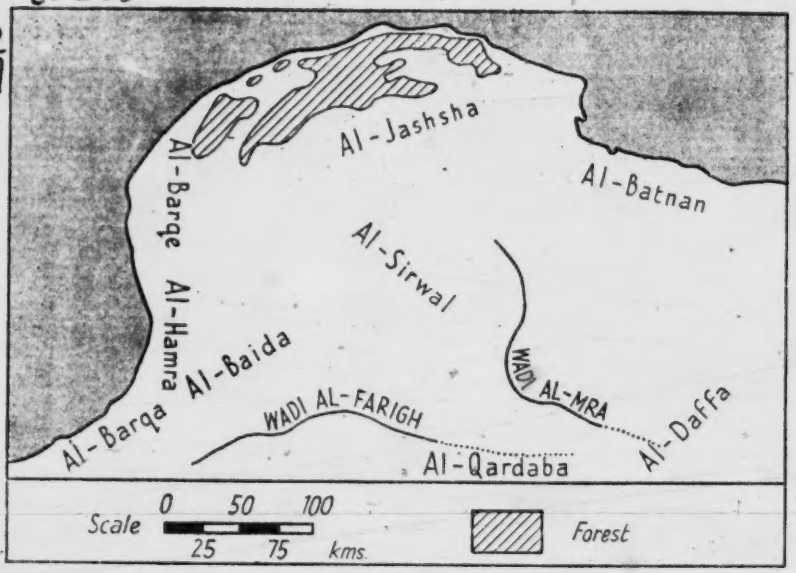
The plateau slopes southwards through a juniper belt. There forest ends and it continues to roll to the southern steppe in stony undulations dissected by many wadis. In the plain at its foot there is plenty of grass and low scrub, and vegetation is thick in depressions, but the country becomes increasingly desolate the farther to the south one journeys towards the lifeless wastes of the Sahara. The eastern part of Cyrenaica is more arid than the west or centre. The Marmarica, the *batnan* of the Arabs, is characterized by low hills rising from the coastal belt and prolonged towards the south to create a succession of crests of several kilometres in depth. The mean annual rainfall is low and wells are restricted to the coastal belt. However, there is, probably in most years, a certain amount of grazing to some fifty miles from the coast during the rains. The Sirtica, the extension of Cyrenaica to the west, is a vast rolling treeless plain traversed by a series of wadis running north–south which in their spread provide most of the summer grazing. Wells are found only near the coast but pasturage is plentiful till the Wadi al-Farigh is reached.

The rainfall very exactly determines the vegetation belts and thereby limits human distribution and imposes a certain way of life. The amount of precipitation depends on a number of circumstances. Mean annual rainfall decreases from west to east. Altitude also affects it. More significant, however, are the variation with latitude, the seasonal rhythm, and annual irregularities. The accompanying map shows how rainfall decreases rapidly from the coast, how only the very limited plateau area is subject to heavy precipitations (400–550 mms.),

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 33]

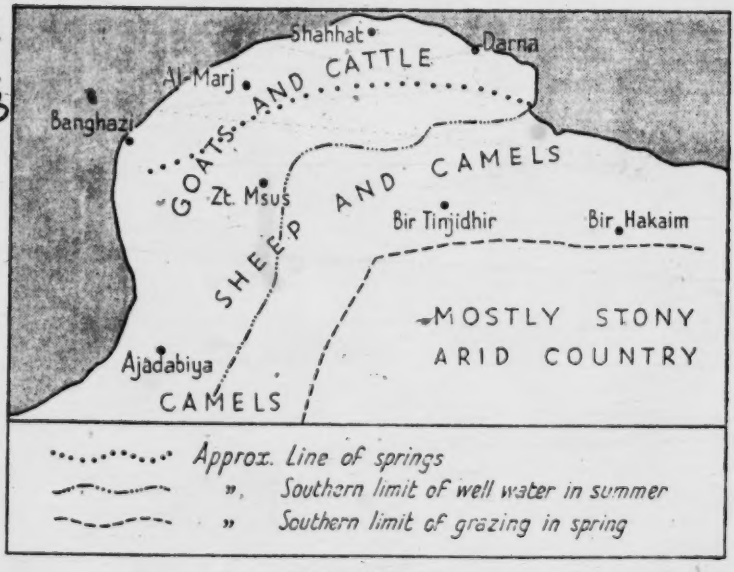
[P. 32]

102
137



Distribution of Forest.

102
312
• 233



Pastoral Zones.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

and the insufficiency of the fall elsewhere. It follows that only on the plateau can there be forest, and only there is a settled and purely agricultural way of life possible; and it was there and on the coastal fringe that in ancient and modern times European colonists settled.

The rains in Cyrenaica fall only in winter, from October to April. In the absence of irrigation the planting season is thus clearly delimited. So is the grazing season to the south of the plateau, for in summer the grasses wither and the wells dry up, compelling shepherds to drive their flocks northwards to the plateau, thus producing the kind of seasonal nomadism known as transhumance. The variation in total rainfall from year to year and the distribution of its fall over the winter months are of the utmost importance for agriculturalists in Cyrenaica. There is still some obscurity, but it is an observed fact that every few years in Cyrenaica there is a year in which the fall of rain is insufficient, or too badly distributed, to raise an adequate crop. In a mixed economy this fact must have given an overwhelming bias towards pastoralism.

The water supplies of the plateau, which depend entirely on rainfall, are sufficient for the needs of the Bedouin and their flocks. The clayey soils are, however, very exacting and running spring water is rare, being for the most part restricted to the triangle Darna–Slanta–al-Haniya. On the western part of the plateau water is conserved in cisterns and wells and on the maritime and *barqa* plains, in the Sirtica and Marmarica, and generally to the south of the plateau, in wells.

The distribution of vegetation in Cyrenaica follows variation in degree of precipitation. Where there is much rain there is forest. Where there is little rain there is steppe. Where there is no rain there is desert. The forest is thick but mainly squat and of very limited extension. An Italian estimate[1] of its distribution is shown on the accompanying map. It is predominantly Mediterranean in type, the juniper and the lentisk being the two commonest trees of the country. Forest ceases a few miles to the south of the high watershed of the plateau and gives way to steppe. The well-known route Tariq 'Aziza is generally regarded as the dividing line between the two kinds

[1] Dott. Giovanni Manzoni, 'Memorie sui boschi della Cirenaica', *Notiziario Economico della Cirenaica*, 1929.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

of country. The whitish soils of the steppe support worts and other scrub bushes and some drought-resisting trees in the beds of wadis and they are well covered with annual and perennial grasses and other plants which yield excellent pasturage in the springtime. However, except in the Wadi al-Mra, where camels can be kept the year round, there is little grazing beyond the line Msus–Bir Tinjidhir–Bir Hakaim.

The Bedouin of the forest area are essentially a goat people, though they also keep many sheep and cattle, and it is mostly through the medium of the goat that the vast natural wealth of the forests of Cyrenaica is transformed into human wealth. The animal is hardy and frugal, and has the great merit of preferring tree and shrub to grass and of being a catholic feeder. Just as the forest would be useless to the Bedouin without the goat so the much vaster stretches of steppe would be useless to them without the sheep and camel which turn its grasses and scrub into food. Thus Cyrenaica is fundamentally a pastoral country, primarily a country of sheep farming, and its people, as they say themselves, have the hearts of shepherds and not of peasants. While agriculture and pastoralism are both practised, the bias of nature and tradition is towards animal husbandry, by which the rich vegetation of the country is turned into milk, butter, meat, wool, hides, and draught and transport.

II

In Cyrenaica stand always contrasted the mountain and the plain, the forest and the steppe, the red soils and the white, the region of goats and cows and the region of sheep and camels, settled life and nomadism.

True nomadism is very rare. A few Fawakhir, Minifa, Huta, and other tribal fragments herd only camels, or if they possess other animals keep them with kinsmen near the plateau, and can therefore wander pretty well where they please. They may be found anywhere between the Nile, Fazzan, and the Sudan. Their spirit is that of an Aulad 'Ali tribesman who said to me: 'We call no place our home. It is wherever there is grass and water.' Semi-nomads are numerous. Those with land on the plateau cultivate there, then graze southwards, and return again to the plateau in the dry season to water their flocks.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

Those of the *barqa* plain may never camp on the plateau but they move freely between grazing grounds, permanent water supplies, and ploughland. 221 233

Of the plateau tribes, the Darsa, the 'Arafa, most of the Hasa, and a number of 'Abaidat and 'Awaqir sections remain there throughout the year. The Bedouin met with wandering about in the southern grazing grounds after the rains are the 'Abaidat Ghaith, 'Awakla, and Shahin, some of the Hasa Shabarqa and Bakhayit, the whole of the small *'Ailat* Fayid tribe, large numbers of Bara'asa Husain, Tamiya, and Masa'id, 'Abid Mansur and Jabar, 'Awaqir Sdaidi and Brahim, and numerous small client groups more or less affiliated to these tribal sections. The nomadic sections are generally richer than the others in sheep and camels, and are also more vigorous, independent, and warlike. Politically, they are the leading sections of the tribes to which they belong. The foremost Shaikhs of the 'Abaidat, Hasa, Bara'asa, 'Abid, 'Awaqir, and Magharba are all to be found during the rains farther away in the steppe than most of their fellow-tribesmen. 221 233 619

The move southwards starts in December after the barley has been sown, or part of a group may take the animals south while the rest finish the ploughing. Most of these semi-nomads return to the plateau in May, when water becomes scarce, but some, including some of the most powerful elements, remain to the south of it permanently. There are many advantages in this annual move to the south. Rain falls and the grasses spring up in advance of the plateau, and grazing is more abundant and of a better quality. On the other hand, the grasses of the plateau and its southern slopes are still green when the desert grasses, except in specially favoured depressions, are withered. By their annual oscillation the Bedouin thus give their animals the best grazing at all seasons of the year. Sheep mostly lamb round about November, which is the month in which new grasses spring up in the *barr*, so that the move southwards gives the sheep the richest grazing at a time when they need it most; and the warmer conditions prevailing in the south suit the lambs. At the same time, the Bedouin in southern grazing grounds are compelled to live very largely on milk food, and the combination of rich pastures with the dropping of their young by sheep, goats, and camels, enables them to live on the country to a great extent. 221 233 [243] [262]

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

221 233 [439] them to live on the country to a great extent. In normal times the Bedouin drive their animals on the hoof to Egyptian markets, slowly, along this rich southern pasture belt, grazing as they go, so that they arrive in good condition. Finally, there can be no doubt about the correctness of the Arab claim that a few weeks residence in the open steppe is a tonic for man and beast.

233 312 423 It must be remembered that there are no water problems at this time of year. Sheep, goats, and camels do not have to be watered from the time the first rains make grass till the end of April or early in May: even horses do not drink until well into April. This fact is important, because it means that the prolific pastures can be grazed by all without dispute, since the wells, which belong to tribal sections or families, are not drawn on. While rain is still falling regularly human requirements are met from pools. To the south of the Tariq 'Aziza, generally speaking, there is no ownership in land—there are no *hudud*, boundaries, as the Arabs say—and anyone may cultivate or graze where he pleases, but there is strict ownership in wells; whereas to the north of the Tariq 'Aziza there is less narrowly restricted ownership in water, which is here spring water in abundance, but there are well-defined rights in arable.[1] The water of the southern wells is essential for the Bedouin who own the country and who live in it all the year round, and their rights are respected by those who graze there. Sheep and goats need only drink every second or third day, even in the hottest weather, so that in the period of meagre pasturage they have a wide range of grazing from the wells, and the dry grasses, supplemented by evergreen shrubs of the goosefoot family, are sufficient nourishment for them. Wells are numerous in the steppe but few of them last out the summer.

233 [221] The animals grazed in the southern steppe are mostly sheep and camels. The Bedouin say 'Cattle and goats do not migrate; camels and sheep do'. Camels are essential to nomadic life as it is impossible to move camp without them, and the richer Bedouin are in camels the more frequently they move, seeking 231 richer pastures. Cyrenaican dromedaries are heavy beasts,

[1] Enzo Savarese, *Le Terre della Cirenaica*, Pt. II, 1928, Chap. VII; Massimo Colucci, *Il Regime della Proprietà Fondiaria nell' Africa Italiana*, vol. i, 1942, pp. 210 seq. and 220 seq.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

243 They could not sow a better crop. There are wild varieties of barley in Cyrenaica and the country is in every way suited to its culture. It is very hardy, stands up to drought, and easily holds its own against the grasses, which are ploughed in with the seed on the plateau. When the barley and wheat have [251] been reaped, the grain is stored in *kuf*. On the plateau these are ancient tomb-caves; elsewhere they are holes dug in the ground.

[731] In a bad year, and even more in a succession of bad years, the Bedouin have experienced famine, but in most years the barley, and to a lesser extent the wheat, give an abundant [433] yield. Bedouin have told me that they expect from sowing in the beds of wadis up to a hundredfold of barley and in the *barqa* up to fiftyfold. On the plateau the yield is smaller and in the Marmarica and Sirtica much smaller. In Turkish times [439] there was a large export of grain from Cyrenaica. Mondaini says that it was to the mean annual value of 40,000 Lire Sterling for the years 1885 to 1900.[1] Much of this surplus was bought by English brewers.

433 The Bedouin way of life is well adapted to their environment.
182 Given the inconstancy of the rainfall and the distribution of water supplies they would be foolish indeed were they not, at any rate in part, shepherds. They are not, of course, in all
433 respects self-supporting. They make their winter tents and a
439 good part of their equipment, carpets, sacks, and so forth, from
182 the wool of their beasts, but some things the Bedouin regard as
[239] necessities have to be imported, notably tea, sugar, some rice, and cloth, especially the *jird*, the woollen cloak of the country. They trade these with surplus stock on the hoof, skins, wool, clarified butter, surplus barley, and honey and wax, so that they are in an economic sense self-supporting.

433 Cyrenaica is a rich country for Bedouin, a poor country for
182 Europeans. Bedouin generally have no overhead expenses in
[556] production. I say generally, because rich men sometimes
[233] employ shepherds, though this is usually the practice of urban
[464] merchants engaged in the sheep trade. Bedouin use their own
[511] labour and that of their families and animals. What is perhaps more important is that they are prepared to live on what

[1] G. Mondaini, *Manuale di Storia e Legislazione Coloniale del Regno d'Italia*. 1927, p. 308.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

any case see them. Consequently no objections were raised—had they been raised no attention would have been paid to them—and there was legal presumption of State ownership in the fullest sense. The judges, therefore, ordered registration of the new lands in the name of the Colony. They comprised about 450,000 hectares, about a quarter of which were immediately allotted to the *Ente* for colonization. It will be noted that the State had already, before this action was taken, been bare owner of the lands as heir to the Turkish *miri* property. What it now gained in addition was, in the opinion of its lawyers, the *possesso utile*. They held further that compensation of those deprived of the use of the lands, while perhaps unnecessary, added to the juridical rigour of the proceeding. In other words, in order to make it look a little less like common robbery it was decided to make a parade of indemnification. The areas to be taken over were estimated in a non-technical way by a surveyor and a clerk of the Land Registry, and the supposed owners were summoned, told that their lands were worth so much, and that this sum would be handed over to them by the Government. Tables of succession showing the share in the land of the various members of the local group who owned it had already been prepared, and if the representatives of this tribal section agreed to the proposal the money could then be paid over on demand.

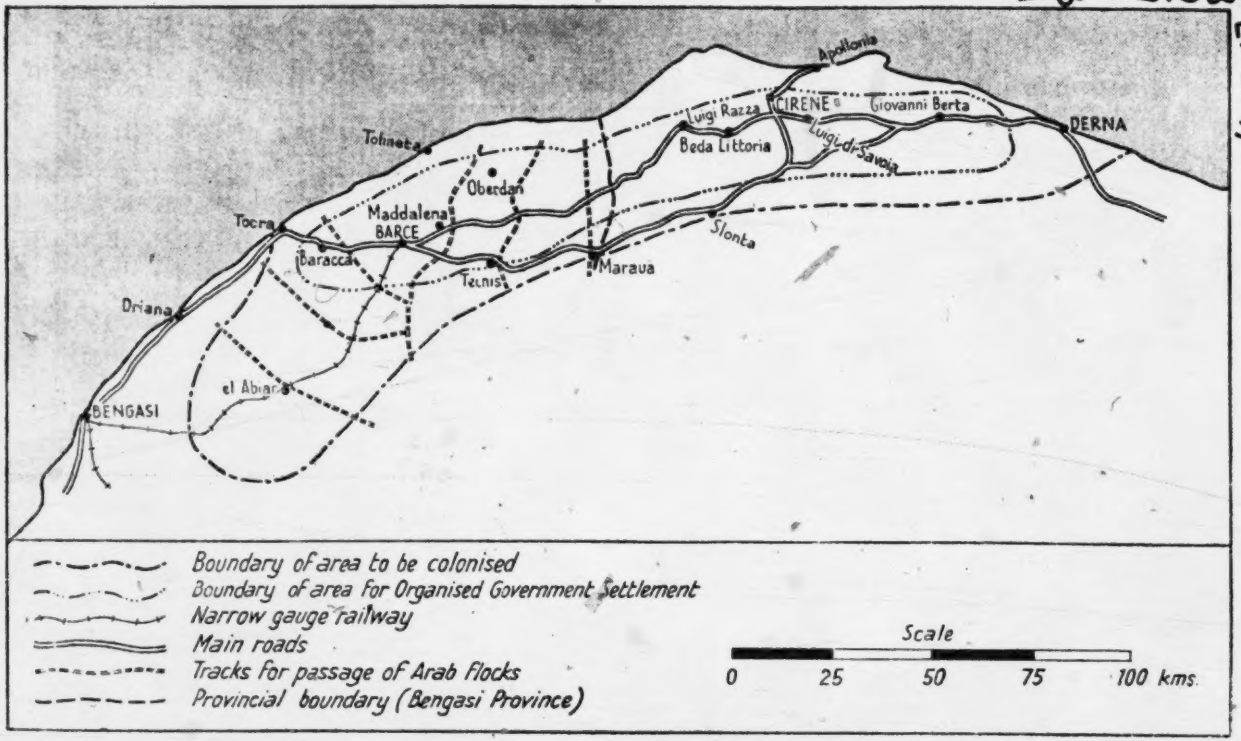
Whether the Bedouin took the money offered in compensation or not they still lost their lands. For this reason most of them took it. Though compensation was in this way offered, the document to which the recipients of it had to affix their seals or thumb-prints was not a contractual agreement for sale and purchase nor an edict of expropriation for public utility purposes, but it was a simple declaration by the owner that he renounced all his rights in the land and transferred them to the State. The Italians had now got all the lands in Cyrenaica which were of any immediate use to them. They had only to allot them to colonists and register them technically as they were required for settlement. The target figure for the zone of colonization was 900,000 hectares.[1]

There remained the question of the Bedouin who had been driven off the lands of their fathers. Clearly they could not be allowed to lead their nomadic life amid the Italian cultiva-

[1] *La Nuova Italia d'Oltremare*, vol. i, p. 552.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 225]

*1175 [P. 224]
*648
102
167
489
233
131



The Italian plan for the colonization of northern Cyrenaica.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942)
Sanusi

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

tions and gardens. On the other hand, it was recognized that if they were to be able to lead a nomadic life at all, and they had to do so if they were to rear their animals, they must have access to water-supplies and grazing-grounds, and that this would sometimes mean their crossing the plateau through the area of Italian colonization. To solve this problem corridors running north and south across the plateau were, as explained in an earlier section, marked out for the transit of Bedouin flocks and herds.

It was envisaged that the Bedouin would continue to lead a predominantly pastoral life on the more rugged parts of the first terrace of the plateau, on its southern slopes, and in the steppe country of the *sirwal*, the *barqa*, the Marmarica, and the Sirtica. It was thought that they had in these areas all the land they needed for grazing and catch-crop cultivation, though it was evident that in years of drought they could not have managed to survive without summer grazing on the plateau. Nevertheless, efforts were made to raise the economic level of the Bedouin by improving their methods of cultivation and stock-raising so that, as both producers and labourers, they might be more valuable an adjunct to Italian husbandry, and might become more dependent on the State and more closely linked with metropolitan activities. It was intended that they should constitute a cheap reserve of labour for general unskilled work and for seasonal labour on the farms of the colonists. By using them in this way it was hoped that it would be possible to avoid the growth of a metropolitan proletariat.[1] These efforts included, largely for political reasons, the creation of Arab colonization centres. Agricultural villages and farms were to be built by the *Ente* similar to, but smaller than, those built for the Italian immigrants. The first two such villages, Fiorita and Alba, were built in 1939. Each Arab farming family was provided with a house, a well, a camel, a cow, and farm implements. Like the Italian, the Arab colonist was to be first salaried labourer, then partner with the State, then mortgagor, and finally owner. As only thirty-two holdings were prepared at Fiorita and Alba the contribution to native agriculture cannot be regarded as more than a token one. Moreover, the Italians experienced difficulty in finding Arab colonists for even these

[1] Ibid., p. 622.

4: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1970 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

613
619
13
182

secondary sections, in their very unevenness, show a more sensitive relation to more detailed ecological differences.

At all levels of segmentation, therefore, a high degree of consistency between the ecological divisions of the country and the genealogical divisions can be shown. Indeed the relationship is so close that it is tempting to consider the contemporary pattern of things as the only one possible. What historical evidence exists is against such a view being taken. It is known that tribes [167] have been displaced in the past, some of them or sections of them having been pushed out into Egypt, and others having altered their position. This being so, there obviously cannot be any finality about the present distribution of tribes in relation to the ecological divisions of the country. Rather, the existing pattern is one of a number of possible permutations. Again, as the relation between groups of people to their environment becomes progressively sensitive with the decrease in the size and order of the group, then the more unstable will be the relationship between the two. Conversely the greater the size and order of the group the more persistent will be its relationship to the ecology. In other words, the major ecological divisions are more fundamental in their effect on the way of life and the economy of people, whereas the more detailed ecological differences between, say, tertiary sections have a relatively minor effect. The [233] [433] ecological differences between the wooded plateau area with its cow and goat herding economy, and the arid semi-desert area with its camel and sheep herding economy has a much more profound effect on the general way of life, and is a more persistent division, than that which exists between two tertiary sections where the differences may only be in topographical details.

While therefore, the division of people into groups of various sorts is not permanently fixed in relation to ecological divisions, there is always an intimate relationship between the two which is progressively more enduring as the order of the structural segment increases. Yet even this statement of the relationship, guarded as it is, does not suffice, for the pattern and distribution of tribes and their sections at any given moment are not only a function of ecology, but they are also the result of a number of other complex factors which may be operating to reinforce or to

5: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1967 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

sections constituting the combinations which makes the facts of feud intelligible. Furthermore, several different types of power structures exist which serve the different interests of the people composing them, and these are interlinked in combinations of superior span. But the formation of these structures and the modes in which they combine are quite unlike the articulations in a lineage system. Characteristically, the segments in a lineage system are conceived of as building up hierarchically to span what is spoken of as a total society, the apex of the system affording a spectacular and fixed definition of its boundaries. Had I been using this concept in this paper the founding ancestress of the nine Cyrenaican tribes, Sa'ada as named by the Bedouin, would have served this purpose and would have been given inappropriate prominence. The views presented here have the consequences of retreating from a concept of a total society. The people to whom the facts given are related are the camel-herding tribes only. Some of them have relations of many kinds with the cow-herding folk who inhabit the northern plateau area, and these relations are also significant for the analysis of a wide range of problems; genealogically both cow and camel herders are seen as part of a single structure, but the differences between them with regard to their economy, the size, composition, and distribution of their residential units, their political and ritual life is so great that to conceive of them as a single social structure is not useful. Moreover, the far western tribal sections have relationships of such urgency with their neighbours in Tripolitania (who are excluded from Cyrenaican genealogies) that to cut off these relationships as lying outside Cyrenaican society would be quite unwarranted. The same can be said of the relationships of the tribal sections in the eastern part of Cyrenaica with their genealogical cousins, the Aulad 'Ali of Egypt, who, although residing across a national border, are closely linked to some of the Cyrenaican Bedouin. Some tribes also have to rely on the people of the southern oases for an item of diet and an outlet for surplus wool, and the net of kinship is spread out to include them. In these cases they come into contact with other ethnic groups such as Berbers and Tibu, and through the oases they extend their lines of communication southwards to Wadai, Chad, and Bornu. As an indication of the effectiveness of these links, it is only necessary to add that people inhabiting Cyrenaica make periodic and regular visits to these far southern places, and that in 1948 a shaikh, living near Ajadabiya in south-western Cyrenaica, collected blood-money contributions from kinsmen in Wadai. A single structure cannot possibly include, for analytical purposes, these sorts of relationships.

Finally, it must be stressed that the facts given here refer to the period 1948 to 1950. Since then oil has been discovered in large quantities near the territory of a tribe where I spent most of my time while resident in the country, and where there was one tin shack in 1950 there is now a modern port with roads extending southwards from it into the wilderness. I see no reason to assume that social relations as I observed them are present today or that they were the same at any time in the past either. Before the advent of the Sanusi Order in the early eighteen-forties, it is known that one lineage at least was dominantly powerful and that its leader tyrannized a large part of Central Cyrenaica.[1] His descendants constituted a powerful group in

[1] Smith and Porcher, 1864. These two archaeologists met this leader and continued their archaeological researches around Cirene only with his goodwill, although the site is not on the territory of his tribe as I knew it in 1950. They also speak of him as inhabiting a castle which also lies outside the

between man and man, although the various cereal dishes which constitute their regular meals are said to have a similar effect.

The son who continues to eat with his father "as he always had been doing," also continues to accept his authority. Indeed he could do little else at this stage, for he lacks the economic means to cut away. Neither at marriage nor after is there any transfer of wealth from father to son. The new tent recently pitched is no more than a dormitory to which the young couple retire at night. During the daytime the son is still to be seen in his father's tent, and, in the male quarters, things appear to be much the same as before. In the female quarters, the only superficial change is the more frequent appearance among the women of one who, before marriage, often sat among them if she had been a close neighbour or a close cousin previously; or of an additional helper if she had come from afar. On the surface things remain "as they always have been," although in fact, a whole set of changes have been initiated.

Rites de passage are few among the Bedouin. A man's progress in life is ceremonially marked by only four events: his birth, circumcision, marriage and burial. His development into manhood is not marked by clearly defined stages. About the age of seven, the henna markings on the front of a boy's shirt for protection from the evil eye are not renewed, the cowrie shell stitched to the front of his cap as a kind of talisman against the evil eye is removed and he is no longer permitted free access to the women's quarters. As he grows older, he will be instructed in goat-herding, and later taught to follow the sheep. In his late teens he will have to undertake the more arduous and responsible task of herding the camels. Coincident with camel-herding, he may be given a gun by his father. Shortly afterwards he must undertake the stringent test of manhood, a journey to a distant oasis for dates. These changes are not marked off by a *rite de passage*. The rites a man undergoes during the course of a lifetime are minimal, and in the sense that they are concerned with only the basic events in a man's life anywhere (save for circumcision, which is a minor celebration anyway), they are irreducible. Moreover, the rituals which exist do not comprehend the same multiplicity of relationships as rituals which occur in many other African societies.[4] It is true that the ceremonies referred to in this chapter by no means include all the Bedouin rituals. It is also true that the events mentioned vary in elaboration, and in the number of symbols present in them, but they are not multiplied or reduced for different people.

In this context it is important to stress that we are here dealing with a lineage society where social differentiation is not built up into differences of rank, where the roles to which a man succeeds are almost wholly captured by his kinship relationships with other men and which are sociologically to be distinguished from the roles a man enters into by acquisition of office,

[4] See, for example, the elaboration of rituals discussed in M. Gluckman (Ed.), *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1962.

6: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1965 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

sorts of petty ways, listen to his grumbles about his agnates, interfere on his behalf in petty camp quarrels, shield him from the disciplinarian father and guard his property interests against the predatory father's brother; if the mother's brother dies without heirs, the sister's son can reasonably expect at least a share of his wealth. When the mother's brother is a member of a different corporate group, a sister's son cannot possibly expect to inherit from him in any circumstance.

The mother's brother may reside in a camp too distant to be much effective direct help in day-to-day living. His relative remoteness gives the relationship other possible opportunities, however. Rainfall in the semi-desert area of Cyrenaica is highly variable, both from year to year, and from place to place in any given year. As a result this shallow saucer of a depression may have sufficient rain to supply both the water needs of animals and crops, while an area a few miles distant will have inadequate water supplies for either. The mother's brother-sister's son link can mean water for animals and a crop of barley for both when, in successive years, the resources of one area or the other are inadequate.

The differences in the relations between men and their mother's brother do not end with a characterisation of their antipodal forms. The demographic structure of a group may be such that one man may have a number of mother's brothers, another only one; one man may have to share with several brothers, another may be an only son. Complications of this sort determine the precise relationships between men, but however intricate these may be, each corporate group has its matrilateral links with a group occupying a slightly different ecological area, and it also has a plurality of matrilateral connections within it. Further, if a direct connection is not available to any particular individual he can use an indirect link (e.g. father's mother's brother or mother's mother's brother) to satisfy his needs.

The Preference for Males

Thus far, the family and the social matrix in which it is embedded has been discussed in general terms, most particularly in reference to several selected sets of relationships. I wish now to place these relationships in a more specific setting with a brief discussion of the composition of a small camp of a group inhabiting the arid areas of central Cyrenaica. When the Bedouin give their views on the structure of the family in Cyrenaica they speak of it as consisting of a pair of spouses and about ten children, mainly males. The emphasis on males is not mere sentiment, overwhelmingly though it favours them against females. Additional males in a family increase the productive possibilities of a family in the sense that more herdsmen become available and larger ploughing commitments can be undertaken; an increase in the number of females has small effect on production since they are precluded from any direct participation in these activities. Both sexes, ranging in age from about seven years to mature adulthood, are necessary if a family

surface water in jerry cans, bringing them back to the tents, one at a time, on their backs. Clothes are kept clean in the desert, and the women do the washing.

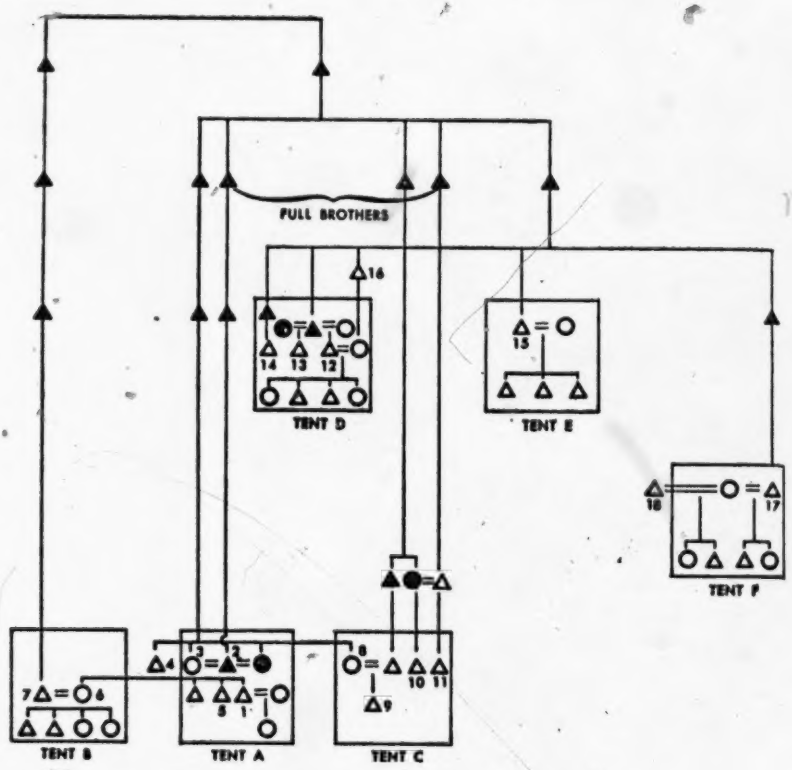
The care of children from birth until they are a few years old is the responsibility of the woman. Childbirth causes a minimum interruption in the daily sequence of a mother's activities. The child is breastfed if the mother has milk; if not, a wet nurse is sought or goat milk is substituted. Other than the time given to feeding it, the infant does not take up much of the mother's time. It is placed in a hammock slung between the centre poles of the tent and rocked by the mother as she passes to and fro. If nursing in illness is required, the mother devotes herself to it; her other tasks must then be performed by another woman.

As children acquire mobility, and at a time when, perhaps, the mother is pregnant again, they become so fractious one with the other that if help was unavailable the nervous strain could seriously disrupt the normal routine of work. During the early years of marriage, when daughters are still too young to look after their small brothers and sisters, the grandmother's help in child-rearing is invaluable. Too old for the arduous tasks of the daily routine, she may assist in teasing and spinning the raw wool, but it is in her role as nursemaid that she assumes importance. Children of both sexes are given the comfort of suckling at her breast, receiving attention and care for which the young mother could not possibly afford the time.

Caring for children takes up little of a man's time, and is mostly incidental. The woman, on the other hand, devotes relatively little of her time to the animals. She does the milking in spring — of camels, sheep and goats — but herding is not her responsibility, save for partly tending goats. Goats, when they are in the vicinity of the camp, are looked after by boys and girls of about eight to ten years of age. In springtime when they have dropped their young, or if some of them have to be retained in the camp at night for various reasons, the woman makes a brushwood enclosure at the side of the tent and sees the goats safely inside before nightfall.

A catalogue of the tasks for which women are responsible may not seem very impressive; the number of tasks is not excessive, but the persistence of the routine bends the backs of most women. Paradoxically, any suggestion that men should take over female tasks would strike them as absurd. Assistance from one of the same sex is always a welcome relief, but the abrogation of a particular task by men would be interpreted by women as the loss of a right. For, in the division of labour, it is not merely that tasks are allocated between the sexes for expedient reasons, or in consideration of the labour involved or because tasks which can be performed in the vicinity of the camp are left to women; division of labour would not make sense on these grounds, however strong they may be in Bedouin sentiments. Each task which falls to the lot of woman constitutes a right exclusive to her. Fetching firewood is not only a chore; it is a woman's prerogative. The insistence that only a woman can undertake certain tasks has nothing to do with her liking

Cases



since meat is shared by all the people of the camp, her wealth was partly dispersed among her poorer kinsfolk.

The location of Tent B was determined by the fact that the wife (6) was the sister of (3) of Tent A. Her husband (7) had moved into the camp a few years earlier as a result of an inheritance quarrel with his elder who robbed him of his fair share. This husband (7) gained in two ways from the move. Although poor, he had a small flock of his own, too small to justify its own shepherd, but which he was permitted to include with his sister-in-law's (3) flock for shepherding. If the flock had been larger he would still have had difficulties, because, at some times of the year, save for short occasional visits to camp, the shepherd is with his sheep for several weeks, day and night. He (7) had three sons, still far too young to follow the sheep, but when they become of age to do so, his dependence on Tent A will cease, for then he can begin to gather the small flocks of other kinsmen around his own, his sons can shepherd them all and he can begin to enjoy the benefits to be derived from dependents. In addition, he enjoyed

Cases

Genealogically he was their father's brother, but he was of their same age generation, and behaved as if he was their agnatic equal. Towards his own brother (16), he behaved as if the latter was his uncle, for he was much his junior in age and his uncle had virtually brought him up from boyhood. They had quarrelled bitterly because his brother (16) had given him only a fraction of his inheritance, which he himself, in turn, should have shared with his young full brother (not shown on the diagram) but he did not do so. This youngest brother left (15) for this reason and now resides with (16), his full brother's enemy. Two of the men (14 and 13) of this group of four were the chief herdsmen of the camp, although they were assisted for short periods by (12) and (15), who also helped tend the camels in other ways. Their connection with the group centered on Tent A was a mutual close link to a politically powerful person (not shown on the genealogies) to whom they are deeply loyal and who, while I was among them, was actively opposed to the common political enemy of them all (16), and who in earlier years had challenged the leadership of (2) of Tent A. There is also the fact that they were all linked within a close range of agnation. This linkage included, too, the owner of Tent F (17), not in fact the descendant of the man shown in the diagram — he was the son of a slave wife; his genitor was a slave, but his mother's master reared him, freed him and he is now given as his son in the genealogy. He lives with his wife, of client origin, together with her children from a previous husband, (18), who divorced her, and his own children. Aging, he no longer acted as a regular herdsmen, but relieved other men in the camp, and also spent some time shepherding.

The details given of the strands which run through the camp to tie these particular people together are so few that, like the Bedouin plough, they do no more than scratch the surface, but they are sufficient to permit a few general statements. The camp, and particularly the precise disposition of its tents, shows a group of males clustered together to share two of the main economic tasks: shepherding and herding. The physically strong adult males of Tents D and E shoulder the burden of herding all the camels of the camp, and the men of Tents B, A and C shepherd all the sheep, with (17) of Tent F serving both purposes. This number of men allows some to remain in the camp at all times, to free one of them for a journey to the distant market when supplies of sugar and tea are necessary, and to enable one or two men, at short notice, to hurry away on horse or camel to search for lost animals.[14]

Economic Determinants of the General Structure of the Camp

It is also clear from these details that, given the disparities in wealth (although all men have some wealth), the diet of most is considerably

[14] There is little point in seeking the lost animals themselves in the first instance. A man travels from camp to camp asking for information, and when he has gathered his clues, he searches a neighbourhood.

8: Kennett G-5 (ca. 1921) 1925 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9

members of a neutral family with grazing camels, and with their help Mirtah was fetched in to the Wadi unconscious. 682 628

The case was reported to the police, but a few hours after his arrival in the Wadi Mirtah quietly died. The post-mortem examination revealed a skull cracked right across, with severe cerebral haemorrhage. In due course the Sirdani family claimed £400 bloodmoney from the Sayed family, according to the custom among the Gawabees tribe. This time, however, an exception was made. The sheikhs decided that the ordinary bloodmoney of £300 only should be paid by the Sayed to the Sirdani family, £100 in money and £200 in kind, divided into six yearly instalments of £50 each. 672

They also added a rider to the effect that they were not awarding Sanaa under the circumstances, as there was no proof of intent to kill, and that weapons such as guns or knives (which would imply premeditation) were not used. The presumption was that the Sayed family, though obviously intending to cause grievous bodily harm, did not intend to kill Mirtah. The fact that he died of his wounds automatically warranted the award of £300 as bloodmoney, but did not constitute sufficient justification for the imposition of the extra £100 as Sanaa.

In Common Law it is not always easy for the uninitiated to understand the legal value of a threat, or what proportion of the punishment for the completed action is due for a mere threat. It was singularly pleasing, therefore, to find a striking instance of a threat to shoot, and to see the attitude of the Bedouin court towards this particular offence. 671 683

An Arab called Abd el Kerim was tolerably well-to-do, and owned several camels, a mare, fair-sized flocks of sheep and goats, and certain cultivation rights; and he had two sons aged about sixteen and eighteen respectively. His cousin, Abd el Salam, who lived half a mile away, had four sons of ages ranging from fifteen to twenty, but he was considerably poorer in this world's goods. Abd el Kerim's sons took their camels out to graze, and inadvertently 233 685

8: Kennett G-5 (ca. 1921) 1925 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9

233 685 [578] wandered over the boundary of Abd el Salam's grazing rights. The juvenile members of Abd el Salam's family came out from their tents in a body, to drive off their intruding second cousins with their camels. An altercation ensued, and the excitement grew; and eventually a pitched battle with sticks and stones began among the lads.

683 One of Abd el Kerim's sons, leaving his brother to hold on for a moment, ran back the half mile to call his father, who returned with him to the scene of the fight carrying his gun. On arrival at the camels, Abd el Salam's sons set on him in a body. Abd el Kerim pointed his gun at one of them and took aim; whereupon one of the other family from behind laid him low with a blow on the top of his head, sufficient to fell an ox.

[114] Abd el Kerim was carried back to his tent, where the writer witnessed the horrible sight of sympathetic but homicidal relatives pawing his open wound with their filthy fingers. A large hole had been knocked in the side of his head, and portions of brain were visible. After some months of surgical treatment Abd el Kerim came out of [694] hospital; and, as the blow was reported to have affected his reason, a case was brought on his behalf by some of his relatives, claiming damages from the family of Abd el Salam. However, before the case was fully completed, [682] Abd el Kerim was taken ill, was re-admitted to hospital, and died. The case therefore became one of bloodmoney, and was dealt with in the usual way.

683 682 695 672 The interesting point about the case, however, lies in the decision of the court, when the first claim for damages was brought up. A very strong line was adopted by the sheikhs, and in the opinion of the court the wounds received by Abd el Kerim were only what he might reasonably expect. They maintained that, after the way in which he had behaved, he was lucky to have got off as lightly as he did. The sheikhs protested that he ought never to have gone out from his tent, and mixed himself up in a fight between a lot of boys. If he had any authority at all, he

9: Murray E. K-3, 4 (ca. 1910-1935) 1935 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Egypt

Had the Senussi been successful in the last war, they would no doubt have brought in the 'Ibeidat or the 'Awaqir from Cyrenaica to replace the Awlad 'Ali in Egypt.

At the present day the Awlad 'Ali, especially the eastern sections near the Nile Valley, have almost ceased to be nomadic, and only the old men have memories of their former warlike habits. They suffered considerably during the Great War, but are again becoming prosperous. They now own large comfortable tents, are beginning to build houses and clear out cisterns, and are also said to be increasing in numbers.[1] So civilized have they grown that my guides, one a Sinai Arab and the other an 'Abadi, concurred in calling them "green"—not real desert-worthy Bedouins.

Perhaps as a result of Libyan influence, or more probably the better nurture and climate, they are taller, heavier, stronger, and lighter-complexioned than the lightly built Arabs of Sinai and Hijaz. Also they are much franker and more straightforward than their shifty and suspicious eastern cousins, and altogether more trustworthy. Their women only veil themselves to strangers, and talk quite naturally and cheerfully to the men of their own tribe.

They cultivate as much barley as they can, using a primitive plough drawn by camels, in the clayey hollows scattered over their very stony limestone desert, but, as the rainfall is very uncertain, a good crop only occurs every five or six years. After harvest, they exchange some of their barley for maize, which the women grind to make bread as required, and some for dried dates. The seed for next year is buried in a hole lined with straw and covered with clay, and a year's forage for the animals is set aside. The rest of the crop goes to market, and for a short time the Arab has money to buy clothes for himself and his family and at utmost need to pay off some of the numerous debts he has inherited from his forefathers. Soon he is reduced again to the clothes he wears, the tent he sleeps in, and his animals grazing in the desert.

They are great breeders of camels and sheep, and a busy traffic in these goes on weekly in the markets of Hammam, 'Amriya, and the Beheira. So they have got into the habit

[1] At the 1927 census, the Western Desert Arabs, Awlad 'Ali, Jawabis, etc., numbered 38,928 souls exclusive of those settled in Beheira. But Pacho, 100 years ago, estimated them at 38,000 souls.